



TALES OF FANTASY AND SUSPENSE!

No.3

10c

FEARIE



Monster of the Storm!

**The Case of the
Painted Beasts!**

The Mirror of Isis!

Was He Dead?

**WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM**



"THE CASE OF THE PAINTED MONSTER!"

...THE STORY OF A STRANGE PAINTING THAT
TOOK REVENGE ON THOSE THAT
SCOFFED AT IT!

THE CURSE OF
AN EGYPTIAN
KING... DEAD
FOR
MANY
CENTURIES,
REACHES OUT
TO FULFILL ITS
MISSION OF
DEATH! READ
WHAT TAKES
PLACE WHEN
BRAD STANFIELD
UNCOVERS THE...

**"MIRROR
OF ISIS!"**



WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE JACK
BURTON? HOW COULD YOU ANSWER THE
BAFFLING QUESTION... "WAS HE DEAD?"

A MAN
WHO
MURDERED
WITHOUT
REASON...
AND THEN
CAME
BACK FROM
THE DEAD
AS
THE...

**"MONSTER
OF THE
STORM!"**

THEY LAUGHED AT TOMMY DUGAN WHEN HE TOLD THEM WHAT HE HAD SEEN! NOBODY BELIEVED HIM! MAYBE YOU WON'T EITHER! BUT WHEN THE NEXT FULL MOON COMES, WOULD YOU WANT TO BE NEAR THAT GRUESOME PAINTING? DON'T ANSWER THAT! NOT UNTIL YOU'VE READ WHAT HAPPENED TO TOMMY DUGAN, THE ROOKIE COP, WHEN HE TRIED TO SOLVE...

THE CASE OF THE PAINTED BEAST!

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE--
I'M JUST SEEING
THING!



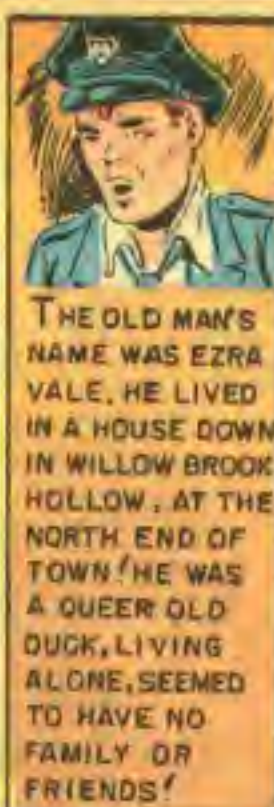
I'M JUST A
ROOKIE COP--TOMMY
DUGAN! MAYBE I'M CRAZY--BUT
IF YOU WANT TO HEAR WHAT HAP-
PENED TO ME, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU
STRAIGHT! YOU'RE WELCOME TO IT-- I'VE
HAD ENOUGH!



IT ALL
BEGAN
LAST WIN-
TER, WHEN
MAYOR
CORBIN
PUT AN
ANNOUNCE-
MENT IN
THE MAPLE
VALLEY
**WEEKLY
ARGUS**,
OUR TOWN
NEWSPAPER!

ANNOUNCEMENT

BY ORDER OF MAYOR JAMES CORBIN
ENTRIES WILL NOW BE RECEIVED FOR
A PAINTING TO BE PURCHASED BY THE
VILLAGE OF MAPLE VALLEY. CANVAS MUST
BE A MINIMUM OF SIX FEET BY SIX FEET.
COMPLETED PAINTING MUST BE SUBMITTED
BY JUNE 1ST. THE JUDGES WILL BE MAYOR
CORBIN AND TOWN CLERK PETER ROLLINS.
THE WINNING CANVAS WILL BE PERMANENTLY
HUNG IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE NEW TOWN
HALL. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS AS TO
SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PAINTING. ARTISTS
ENTERING THE COMPETITION MUST BE
RESIDENTS OF MAPLE VALLEY.



I GUESS THE OLD FELLER WORKED PRETTY HARD ALL SPRING ON HIS PAINTING! THEN, THE END OF MAY, I HAPPENED TO MEET HIM, AND...



THE COMPETING PAINTINGS WERE TO BE UNVEILED IN THE LIBRARY! THERE WAS QUITE A CROWD TAKIN' A LOOK AT THE ENTRIES AS THEY WERE UNVEILED ONE BY ONE!





H-HOW HORRIBLE!



IT SURE GAVE EVERYBODY A SHOCK! NATURALLY, IT DIDN'T WIN!

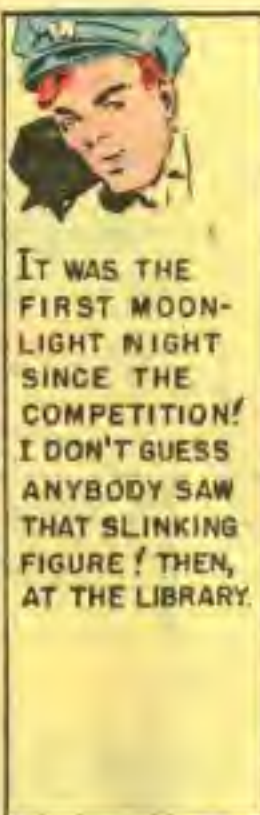
THE PRIZE GOES TO MISS AGGIE SMITHERS, FOR HER PAINTING, "OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS!"

THEY'RE FOOLS! MY MONSTER SHOULD HAVE WON IT!

LOOK AT OLD MAN VALE!



THE NEW TOWN HALL WASN'T READY YET, SO THEY LEFT THE WINNING PAINTING HANGING IN THE LIBRARY! OLD MAN VALE TOOK HIS PAINTING HOME WITH HIM! IT WAS ABOUT A WEEK LATER, WHEN...



IT WAS THE FIRST MOON-LIGHT NIGHT SINCE THE COMPETITION! I DON'T GUESS ANYBODY SAW THAT SLINKING FIGURE! THEN, AT THE LIBRARY.



HEY, THERE! WHAT TH--?



THE WATCHMAN AT THE LIBRARY DIDN'T SEE THE FIGURE CLEARLY! BUT THEN...

WHA--?!



EEEEEE
OOOOOW!



THEN THE HORRIBLE SHAPE MADE A LEAP FOR THE PRIZE WINNING PICTURE, AND...

THE WATCHMAN WAS FOUND NEXT MORNING PRETTY BADLY SMASHED UP! BUT HE WASN'T DEAD, AND WHEN HE CAME BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS...

I'M TELLIN' YER, IT WASN'T ANYTHING HUMAN! IT WAS HORRIBLE...

GUESS THE MORPHINE WE GAVE HIM STILL HAS HIM FOGGY! HE'S BEEN DREAM-ING OF WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM! NOW HE'S ALL MIXED UP!



NOBODY SEEMED TO CONNECT THE WATCHMAN'S WILD TALK WITH THAT PAINTING OF OLD MAN VALES! BUT MAYOR CORBIN DID! AND THAT EVENING...

THAT FELLOW, FLANAGAN, TALKS ABOUT A MONSTER, MARY! UGH! I'M JUST THINK-ING CRAZY THINGS, BUT...

DON'T BE SILLY, JIM!



I WAS ONE OF THE TWO JUDGES WHO REJECTED THAT MONSTER PAINTING! I... WHA...?

JIM... JIM...



THE MAYOR'S WIFE DIDN'T SEE VERY MUCH OF IT! SHE FAINTED!

NO! NO! YOU CAN'T BE ALIVE! YOU'RE JUST A THING PAINTED ON A CANVAS!



EEEEOOOOHHH!





THE MAYOR'S WIFE'S STORY WAS PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE STORY OF THE WATCHMAN! THEN, ROLLINS, THE TOWN CLERK, HAD HAD HIS SUPPER! HE WAS AT HOME, WATCHING A BALL GAME ON TELEVISION!



YEOW! A HOMER! ATABOY!

A HOME RUN!



THIS IS SERGEANT O'MALLEY, A... A MONSTER... THE THINGS ALL CRAZY, OF LOOSE!... A-COURSE! BUT MAYOR CORBIN... AN' YOU... WERE THE TWO JUDGES... ANYWAYS, I'M SENDING A COUPLE OF OUR MEN TO YOUR HOUSE! FOR YOUR PROTECTION...

AND AT THAT SAME INSTANT...



YOWW! IT'S HERE! IT'S GOT ME!



EEEOOW! HELP!

I WAS AT THE STATION HOUSE WHEN THE SARGE WAS PHONIN' ROLLINS! I GOT A BRIGHT IDEA, AND I SLIPPED OUT THE SIDE DOOR AND HOT-FOOTED IT OVER TO VALE'S PLACE...



UGH! GIVES YOU THE CREEPS!

I NEVER WAS MUCH ON GHOST STUFF! OLD MAN VALE MIGHT HAVE GONE OFF HIS HEAD... IMPERSONATING A MONSTER. GETTING REVENGE BECAUSE HIS PAINTING WAS REJECTED...



IF I CAN GRAB THIS OLD GEEZER, MAKE HIM CONFESS... I'LL GET A PROMOTION, MAYBE!





THE THREE GNOMES WHO HAD BEEN IN THE PAINTING WERE DIFFERENT NOW! AND THE MONSTER WAS SMIRKING!

WHY--WHY, THERE THEY ARE!
MAYOR CORBIN, CLERK ROLLINS,
AN' OLD MAN VALE!



THE POLICE RECORDS SAY THAT THE OLD MAN GOT REVENGE ON CORBIN AND ROLLINS, HID THEIR BODIES, AND PAINTED THEIR FIGURES, AND HIMSELF, INTO THE PAINTING! AN' THEN MADE HIS GETAWAY! OKAY, LET IT GO AT THAT! THEY GOT THE PAINTING IN THE STATION HOUSE NOW! AN' WHEN THE NEXT MOONLIGHT NIGHT COMES--YOU THINK I'M GOING TO BE ANYWHERE NEAR IT? NOT ME!



WAS HE DEAD?



WHAT TORTURED MIND, BURDENED WITH KNOWLEDGE OF A HIDEOUS CRIME, COULD WITHSTAND THE SHOCK OF BEING FACE TO FACE WITH THE DEAD? WHEN JACK BURTON, HIS SOUL DRIPPING WITH THE BLOOD OF A MAN HE HAD MURDERED, FOUND HIS VICTIM WALKING BESIDE HIM ON A LONELY STREET... HIS TERROR-RIDDEN BRAIN FORCED HIM TO BREAK THE SILENCE OF THE DEATH-TOMB. HE HAD TO ANSWER THE QUESTION THAT WAS DRIVING FROM HIM THE LAST SHRED OF SANITY... HAD THE MAN HE'D MURDERED ACTUALLY ESCAPED, OR... *WAS HE DEAD?*



BACKSTAGE IN A THEATRE OF A MID-WESTERN CITY, JACK BURTON, LEADING SINGER IN THE SHOW, IS TALKING TO MARILYN BAKER... ONE OF THE SHOWGIRLS.

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO YOUR HUSBAND ABOUT THE DIVORCE?

IT'S NO GOOD, JACK. HE WON'T GIVE ME MY FREEDOM.



LATER... IN BURTON'S DRESSING ROOM...

WHAT CAN WE DO, MARILYN?

I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM DEAD... AND YOU CAN DO IT, DARLING. YOU MUST KILL HIM!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, MARILYN!

YOU TALK ABOUT HOW MUCH I MEAN TO YOU. NOW...LET ME SEE YOU PROVE IT!



THE THOUGHT OF MURDERING MARILYN'S HUSBAND BOTH REPULSED AND FASCINATED BURTON, AND...

IT WOULD BE A WAY OUT... BUT....

WHY IF IT ISN'T MY WIFE'S FAVORITE SINGER? HELLO, BURTON!



WHAT WAS IT THAT BROUGHT MARILYN BAKER'S HUSBAND TO THIS BAR...?

BAKER! I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU. MY CAR'S OUTSIDE... HOW ABOUT ME GIVING YOU A LIFT!

SURE THING... IF YOU THINK YOU'RE IN CONDITION TO DRIVE.



BURTON'S MIND...HAZED BY DRINK... TRIED TO AVOID WHAT WAS ALREADY BECOMING THE INEVITABLE...

LISTEN, BAKER... I'M SURE MARILYN'S TOLD YOU WE'RE IN LOVE, AND....

YOU CAN BOTH ROT IN HADES BEFORE I LET HER MARRY ANYONE ELSE!



WON'T YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

I'LL NEVER CHANGE. ...W...WHAT ARE WE STOPPING HERE FOR!



THIS!

ARGH..H..H!



BURTON DRAGGED THE BODY FROM HIS CAR. HIS BRAIN, CLEARED BY THE SHOCK OF WHAT HE HAD DONE, BEGAN TO WORK FRANTICALLY...

MUST GET RID OF THE BODY!





BURTON OPENED THE DOOR OF THE CRYPT, AND STEPPED INSIDE. HE LOCATED THE SPOT HE'D BEEN SEARCHING FOR...



THEN BURTON'S ONLY THOUGHT WAS TO GET AWAY AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...

WHAT AM I AFRAID OF? BAKER'S DEAD NOW... AND I'VE GOT MARILYN FOR MYSELF.



THE NEXT DAY, JACK BURTON KEPT TO HIS ROOM, OPPRESSED BY A STRANGE, UNREASONED DREAD. THAT NIGHT, JUST BEFORE STAGE TIME...

M-MARILYN... I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

YOU DO? ALL RIGHT...



FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE... RELAX! WHAT ARE YOU SHAKY ABOUT?

MARILYN... LISTEN! I DID IT... I KILLED HIM!



I DIDN'T THINK YOU HAD IT IN YOU! BUT WHY BE NERVOUS NOW... IT'S ALL OVER WITH.

I KEEP FEELING HE'S STILL HERE... WATCHING ME. LAUGHING AT ME!



BURTON'S FEARS DIMINISHED UNDER MARILYN'S RIDICULE! THEN THE STAGE MANAGER CALLED AND SAID THAT JACK BURTON WAS DUE ON-STAGE.



BUT BURTON WAS DUE FOR A GREAT SHOCK! WAS IT HIS TANGLED NERVES OR WAS THE OCCUPANT OF THAT BOX REALLY BAKER?



FEAR SNAPPED AT BURTON'S HEELS. REASON TOLD HIM THAT A DEAD MAN COULDN'T BE SITTING IN A THEATRE BOX... AND YET, HE KNEW HE HAD SEEN HIM...



GRADUALLY, JACK BURTON SLOWED TO A WALK... FEELING A LITTLE FOOLISH ABOUT RUNNING AWAY...



BUT THE FLICKERING OF THE LIGHTED MATCH REVEALED NEW HORRORS TO JACK BURTON...



BURTON FLED, BUT EVEN SO, HE COULD NOT ESCAPE THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER THAT FLOATED BEHIND HIM... MOCKING HIM...





BURTON DECIDED THE SAFEST THING TO DO WOULD BE TO GET AWAY FROM TOWN...

THERE'S SOMEONE WHO WANTS A LIFT. I COULD USE A LITTLE COMPANY RIGHT NOW.



COME ON, HOP IN... ARGHHHHH!

THANKS A LOT!



THE SIGHT OF WHAT APPEARED TO BE BAKER BY THE ROADSIDE WAS THE FINAL BLOW THAT SHATTERED THE LAST STRAIN OF REASON IN JACK BURTON.

I'LL KILL HIM AGAIN... GOT TO GET INTO THE CRYPT...



I TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE KEY, SO...

I'M GETTING THOSE KEYS! YOU'RE JUST LIKE THE REST!



DON'T... AAAGH!

TRY TO STOP ME NOW!



ONCE I KNOW YOU'RE NOT IN HERE... I WON'T BE AFRAID OF YOU ANYMORE...

NOW... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS MAKE SURE HE'S NOT THERE... WHAT'S THAT!

LEAVING THE CARE-TAKER TO BLEED TO DEATH, BURTON WAS READY TO ENTER THE CRYPT.



THERE WAS A FOOTSTEP
OUTSIDE THE CRYPT...

AYIIIIIIIIII!!



I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
FOR A LONG TIME.

GET AWAY
FROM ME,
BAKER!



DON'T WORRY...I'M NOT GOING TO
TOUGH YOU. I'M NOT EVEN GOING
ANYWHERE NEAR YOU! IN FACT,
I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU ALL ALONE!



THE FIGURE
OF BAKER
STEPPED
BACK AND
SLAMMED
THE DOOR
OF THE
CRYPT SHUT.
THE TERROR
OF HIS SITU-
ATION
DAWNED ON
THE CRAZED
MURDERER...

NO! NO! I CAN'T OPEN IT
FROM THE INSIDE!



LET ME OUT!
HELP! HELP!



THE NEXT
DAY MR.
WATSON,
SPURRED
BY THE
CRAZED
ACTIONS
OF HIS
STRANGE
VISITOR,
REVISITED
THE CRYPT
OF HIS
DEAD
WIFE.
AND...

THIS IS JUST WHERE
I FOUND HIM.

LOOKS AS
THOUGH HE
DIED OF
FRIGHT!

HEY, MITCH,
COME OVER
HERE!



ANOTHER
CORPSE! I'LL NEVER FIGURE OUT HOW
A GUY WHO GOT SUCH A BANG
ON HIS HEAD AS THIS, COULD
HAVE DIED SMILING!



JOHN UNTER, THE ONE-ORIGNAL CRIME WAVE! THEY CALLED HIM THAT, AND THE TERRORIZED LITTLE VILLAGE OF MOSSY GLEN WAS THANKFUL WHEN, OUT OF THE STORM, A LIGHTNING BOLT LEAPED DOWN AND KILLED HIM! CAN THE DEAD SOMETIMES BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE LIVING? JOHN UNTER WAS DEAD, BUT THEN THERE WAS THE GRISLY, BLOOD-CHILLING THING...

THE MONSTER OF THE STORM



EIGHT MILES TO MOSSY GLEN! GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE THAT FELLA A LIFT!

PETE TORRENCE, DRIVING HIS LONG DISTANCE TRUCK, STOPS FOR A HITCH-HIKER!



AIN'T SUPPOSED TO TAKE NO RIDERS! BUT A GUY CAN'T KEEP DRIVIN' A TRUCK ALL NIGHT WITHOUT TALKIN' TO SOMEBODY!

THANKS A LOT!



SAY, IF YOU LIVE AROUND HERE, MAYBE YOU GOT IDEAS ON THAT STORM MONSTER BUSINESS! FELLA IN AN ALL NIGHT LUNCHROOM WAS TELLIN' ME ABOUT IT, LAST TRIP THROUGH! 'COURSE I DON'T BELIEVE

MONSTER?
WHAT MONSTER?

IN SUCH THINGS MY-
SELF, BUT...



SEEMS IT BEGAN A FEW MONTHS AGO! ACCORD-
ING TO THE WAY THEY TELL IT, THIS HERE
MOSSY GLEN IS HAUNTED BY A HORRIBLE
MURDERIN' GHOST-THING! THEY CALL IT
MONSTER OF THE STORM! IT ONLY
COMES OUT ON
STORMY NIGHTS!



GUESS IT
WAS ABOUT
LAST MAY!
MAN WHO
LIVED IN
MOSSY
GLEN, NICE
QUIET

FELLA NAMED JOHN
UNTER! NOBODY
NOTICED HIM MUCH!
TRADESPEOPLE SAID
HE WAS SORT OF
QUEER... ALWAYS GET-
TIN' ANNOYED AT
SOME LITTLE THING!
THEN ONE MORNIN',
IN THE DRUG STORE...



SO YOU WERE TOO BUSY TO
DELIVER ME THAT PACKAGE
OF RAZOR BLADES, YES-
TERDAY? OKAY, I'VE HAD
ENOUGH OF YOU!

WHA...?



NOBODY CAN DO THAT
TO JOHN UNTER AND
GET AWAY WITH IT!

HEA!



THAT FELLA SURE DID BUST
LOOSE AN' TURN HIMSELF INTO
A ONE-CRIMINAL CRIME WAVE!

GOT
HIM!

HEY, THERE,
WHA...? YEOW!



THEN HE RAN INTO TONY'S BAR-
BERSHOP NEXT DOOR... SO
YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP ME
WAITING EVERYTIME I WANT
MY HAIR CUT, DO YOU?



NOBODY CAN INSULT JOHN
UNTER AND
LIVE TO
BOAST
OF IT!

EEEEOW!



THAT WAS QUITE SOME MORNING IN MOSSY GLENN...

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS FOR MOUSY HAMBURGERS!
NOBODY CAN DO THAT TO JOHN UNTER!

IT'S JOHN
UNTER! HE'S
GONE CRAZY!

HE'LL KILL US!
HELP! HELP!



THEY COULDN'T CATCH HIM...

THERE HE
GOES!

WE CAN HEAD HIM OFF AROUND
THE BLOCK!

NOBODY CAN
STOP ME! NEVER! I'LL
KILL THEM ALL!



HE FINALLY HEADED OUT OF TOWN! BY THAT TIME THE SHERIFF
WAS WITH THE MEN CHASIN' HIM!

THERE HE GOES
INTO THE WOODS!

NOBODY CAN EVER STOP ME!
NOTHING CAN STOP ME! HA! HA!



A SUDDEN THUNDER STORM HAD COME UP,
AND...



THE LIGHTNING BOLT KILLED HIM! HE WAS DEAD
ALL RIGHT, NO ARGUMENT ON THAT

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING! SAME
THING AS THE CHAIR!
ONLY QUICKER!

HE'S DEAD! WELL,
THAT'S A BLESS-
ING!

LITTLE
MOSSY GLEN
BREADED
AGAIN! THEY
BURIED
JOHN UNTER
OVER IN THE
ROLLINS-
VILLE CEM-
ETARY, AN'
EVERYBODY
THOUGHT
THAT WAS
THE END OF
IT! SHERIFF
JOHNSON
DID, UNTIL
ONE NIGHT...

UNTER!?
NO! NO!
IT CAN'T BE!
IT CAN'T!
YOU--YOU'RE
DEAD!

YES!

AAAHH!



IT WAS RAINING OUTSIDE NOW! AN ELECTRIC STORM HAD COME UP, WITH LIGHTNING FLARES AND THUNDER CRACKS!



NO! NO!

AS THE THUNDER CRASHED AND THE LIGHTNING GLARE BRIGHTENED THE LITTLE ROOM, A TERRIBLE CHANGE WAS TAKING PLACE IN UNTER...

NO! NO! HELP!

EVEN DEATH CANNOT STOP ME! HA! HA!



REVENGE!

H-E-L-P!
OH-HH--!



GRRRRR!



HA! HA!



AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, DOWN THE STREET IN MCCOY'S LUNCH-ROOM...

OKAY, BUT I'M TELLIN' YER I SEEN IT! JUST NOW-- FLOATIN' OUT OF THE SHERIFF'S HOUSE! THE GHOST OF JOHN UNTER! AN' HE LOOKED AWFUL! I NEVER SEEN SUCH A--

WHAT YOU BEEN DRINKIN', CHARLIE?

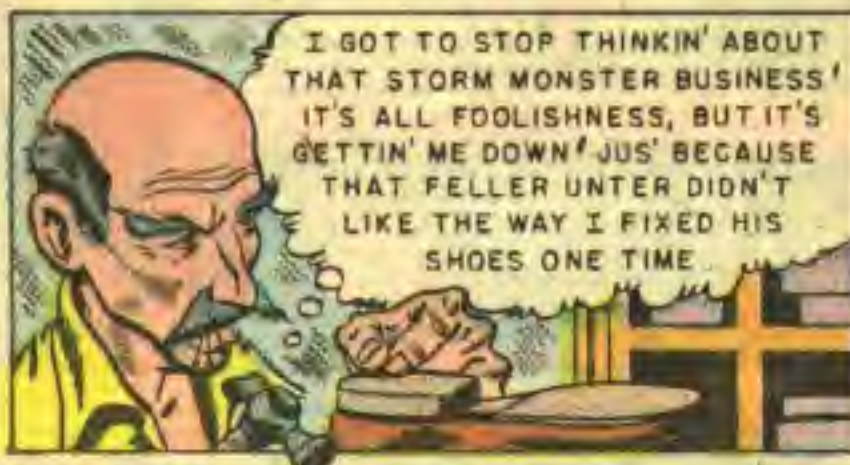
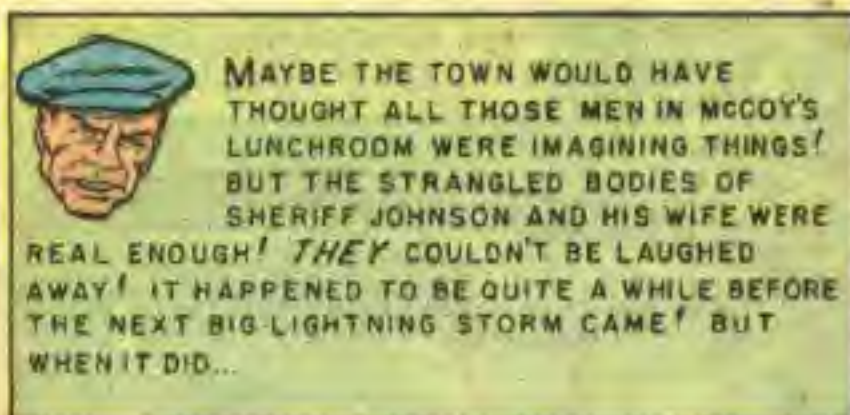
I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T!
HA, HA!

GIVE HIM A CUP O' COFFEE, MAC, HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
HA, HA!



OKAY, BUT I DID SEE IT! IT'S GREEN, LIKE LIGHTNIN'! IT'S-- IT'S-- EEEEEOWW! LOOKIT THERE!





IN MOSSY GLEN NOW, THEY SAY THAT MONSTER APPEARS WITH EVERY BIG STORM! SURE SOUNDS CRAZY TO ME!

MY CHANCE AGAIN!
HA! HA!



YEAH, LIKE I SAY, SURE SOUNDS CRAZY TO ME! WE'RE PRETTY NEAR TO MOSSY GLEN NOW! WHERE'LL I DROP YOU?

OH, ANYWHERE!
THANKS!



HELLO, IT'S RAINING! I GOTTA PULL UP A MINUTE AN' FIX MY FOOL WINDSHIELD WIPER! IT GETS STUCK!



I SHOULD'VE FIXED THAT WIPER BACK IN ROLLINSVILLE CEMETARY, RIGHT ABOUT WHERE I PICKED YOU UP, REMEMBER? THAT'S WHERE JOHN UNTER IS BURIED!

IS IT?



HEY, NO NEED TO GET OUT! I GOT IT FIXED!



NO! THAT'S CRAZY... I... DON'T BELIEVE IN...?

HA! HA!



HELP!



THE END

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SEND STRIP OF PAPER TO SHOW RING SIZE.



KILL A WITCH!

When Hinchley saw the snake he screamed and ran wildly down the path. I took out after him, and in a few seconds caught up with him. I grabbed his arm and spun him around. He was shaking with fear.

"What's the matter with you, Hinch!" I barked at him, "You're not afraid of a King snake, are you?"

He cried out weakly, as if talking to someone else, "Not yet. Not yet, please."

"Snap out of it. That snake won't hurt you." He was still shaking and moaning. "All right," I added, "stay here while I go back up there and chase it away." And that's all I would do. I wouldn't kill a snake if my life depended on it.

I walked up close to the reptile, making as much noise as I could, and as I expected, it glided swiftly off the path and into the woods.

Then I headed back toward Hinchley. "It's gone now, Hinch. Let's get going."

I started back up the path with Hinch, still very much frightened and dazed, plodding along at my heels. I glanced back at him, and the poor guy was peering all around as if he expected that snake to pop out of the woods at any moment and attack him.

"What ails you, Hinch?" I mumbled. "I've seen you catch rattlers and moccasins with your bare hands to win a screwy bet, and along comes a snake that's as harmless as a fishworm and you run away and scream your head off like a frightened schoolgirl."

He didn't say a word, just kept on shuffling along cautiously as if sudden death awaited his every step.

After about ten minutes of walking, during which neither of us spoke, we

arrived at the railroad. Hinchley broke the silence.

"The freights slow down here," he said. He seemed somewhat calmer as we seated ourselves in the little grassy clearing alongside the tracks, but there was still a trace of fear.... fear of a King snake?

"Look, Hinch," I said. "We've knocked around together for quite a while. If something's bothering you, why not get it off your chest? I may not be able to help you, but I am a good listener."

"You'll think I'm crazy like the rest of them did," he snapped. "But I'm not! It really happened!"

"What happened, Hinch?" I coaxed. "Tell me."

And he told me. I'll never forget the wild scared look in his eyes as he stammered out his story.

"It was several years ago," he began, "I was put in jail in a small town in Georgia on a vagrancy charge. I was sulking in my cell when the local police brought in another prisoner and locked him in a cell across from me.

I figured I'd have someone to talk to for a while, so I politely asked him what he was in for.

"I killed a witch tonight," he growled at me.

I laughed. I know I shouldn't have, but it sounded so ridiculous—witches in this day and age!

"Look Mac," he snarled, "it ain't funny. So how about shutting your trap now and letting me alone?" So I did as he said and shut up.

Night came on, and there wasn't a peep out of the witch killer until very late when the dim silence of the old jail was broken by a terrified scream

from his cell.

No one came back to see what was happening. All of the cops must have been out looking for more vagrants or something. I strained my eyes against the dim corridor light to see what was going on.

The killer had picked up his stool and, cursing loudly, was batting it furiously against the floor.

By this time I thought he was completely nuts, and then I saw it—a King snake about a yard long was in his cell, and he was trying to kill it with his stool, but the snake skillfully evaded every blow.

Then that snake coiled in the corner and spoke! It actually talked, in a thin high cracked feminine voice!

'I've come to get you, Larkin,' it said to the prisoner. 'I am going to eat you.'

Larkin dropped his stool and stood there trembling and mumbling things I couldn't catch. Then he seemed to get hold of himself and laughed.

'I must be nuts!' he shouted. 'The witch is dead. She can't harm me now!'

'Ah, you forget, Larkin, the powers of a witch,' the snake cooed. 'Even in death I can take the form of an animal. All humans are reincarnated in the animal form most akin to their personalities. Being evil, but not evil enough to take the shape of a venomous serpent, I have become this seemingly harmless constrictor, the King snake.'

Larkin, frightened though he was, laughed again.

'How can such a small snake as you swallow a six foot man like myself?' he asked in a sneering tone.

'Are you really that tall?' the snake asked tauntingly.

It was then that I realized that Larkin was shrinking. He was no longer the big man so recently locked in the cell. He was actually growing smaller and smaller, and his clothes seemed to shrink with him. Larkin dumbfoundedly noticed his change in size.

'Another of the powers granted me

by Satan,' the coiled form said. 'Soon you'll be just right for me, Larkin.'

Larkin screamed, a high piercing scream as might come from the throat of a midget, and tried to squeeze his tiny body through the bars of his cell. He struggled and pushed, and the snake laughed at him in a hideous cackling manner that made more shivers run up my already shivering spine.



Then she struck and sank her teeth in his shoulder and threw him viciously across the cell up against the wall. She must have broken his back, because he couldn't move—just sat in a heap about six inches high staring dazedly across his cell.

The snake darted out, caught him again and threw her coils around his helpless body. I could see the pressure being put on and hear faint high-pitched screams of agony intermingled with a sound as of chicken bones being broken and torn.

Then she relaxed her coils and took Larkin's motionless and broken little body into her mouth head first and started to swallow him whole, and down he went in slow undulating movements.

The fascination was over for me, and I lost my head. I screamed loud and long. With Larkin fully consumed the reptile looked sleepily over toward me. I was terrified.

'I have no fear now,' she said. 'I have eaten well tonight, but since you have unwittingly observed this work of my master, Satan, you too must some day suffer the same fate.' And with that she crawled sluggishly into the corner where she coiled and seemingly

went to sleep.

I must have passed out then. The next thing I knew there was a noisy commotion in the corridor.

A rough voice barked out, 'Larkin's gone!'

Another voice snapped at me, 'What happened? How did he get out?'

'He didn't!' I screamed. 'He's in that snake!' And I pointed to the corner where the snake still lay sleeping off its grisly meal.

'Kill it! Kill it! Open its belly. That's where Larkin is'. I must have sounded quite mad as I babbled out the entire story to them.

'This guy is crazy as a loon,' the rough voice said. But one of the policemen went into the cell and easily clubbed the snake to death. Then, laughing at me, he slit the creature's stomach. There in the snake was a large freshly killed rat.



'There's a bunch of them rats around here,' the rough voice said. 'This guy is really whacky.'

'No!' I screamed, 'Larkin must have been alive when he was swallowed and then died in the snake's stomach. He was reincarnated as a rat!'

No one would believe my story, and I was locked up in an insane asylum. Finally after a couple years of that I lied to the doctors and denied the whole affair, and for this I was judged sane and set free.

I thought that, after I was released everything would be all right. I had seen the evil snake killed, therefore she could never harm me. Then one day when I was working in a Carolina lumber camp I was startled in the woods by a King snake exactly like

the one which ate Larkin. It spoke to me!

'Ah, Hinchley, you recognize me,' it said, and it even knew my name. 'It won't be too long now. I'll soon be hungry.' And with that it slithered off into the brush.

Now I was more terrified than ever. My days were numbered. Just after that I started to knock around with you, and since you know my story you probably think I'm crazy too. But it did happen. It really did!"

Well, I couldn't believe him either, but I did make an attempt to make him think I believed. Poor Hinch. Harmless, but nutty as a pecan roll.

Like clockwork the freight we were waiting for popped into view. We ran back out of sight until the forward end of the train had passed us. Then, seeing an open boxcar, we made a dash for it and were soon not-too-comfortably quartered in the empty car.

It was soon dark and I stretched out on the hard floor to try and get some sleep. Hinchley just sat quietly up against the side of the car.

I woke up just after dawn. "Hinch," I said, "let's get ready to get out of here. Hinch! Where are you? Did that crazy fool fall out of this wagon?"

He was nowhere to be seen. I was the only one in the car, but I felt there there was something else in with me—and there was.

Just inside the shadow of the door I could see a coiled form, maybe an old rope. I walked over to it, and then I knew. A King snake was coiled in perfect contentment on the floor of the boxcar sleeping.

I prodded it with my foot, and it sluggishly unwound itself. I couldn't help but shudder when I saw the tell-tale bulge in its belly.

I reached down and grabbed it, and being the docile creature it is, it made no attempt to bite me.

"Lady," I said, "I didn't see a thing."

And then I tossed it gently out the door. I wouldn't kill a snake if my life depended on it.

7 HE HATE OF COUNTLESS CENTURIES, GROWING STRONGER WITH EACH PASSING YEAR, REACHES OUT TO FULFILL ITS MISSION... **TO KILL!** THOSE WHO SCOFF AND TURN AWAY FALL EASY VICTIMS TO THE EVIL THAT DEMANDS DEATH, BUT STRETCHES OUT TO THE LIVING THROUGH

THE MIRROR OF ISIS!



THE QUIET SUMMER AIR BEARS NO HINT OF THE HORROR TO COME AS BRAD STANFIELD AND HIS BRIDE MOUNT THE STEPS OF A LARGE HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A SMALL MID-WESTERN TOWN...

THIS IS IT, DARLING. I'M SURE MY GRANDFATHER WILL BE AS CRAZY ABOUT YOU AS I AM!

I-I HOPE SO... DURING A WEEK'S VISIT WE SHOULD GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL...



SO THIS IS ELYSE! - I'M SO HAPPY TO KNOW YOU, MY DEAR... WHERE ARE YOUR BAGS?

BRAD THOUGHT WE SHOULD LEAVE THEM AT THE STATION AND SEND FOR THEM LATER.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE BURDENED WITH THEM RIGHT NOW, SIR...



AFTER THE INITIAL GREETINGS WERE OVER, BRAD'S GRANDFATHER INTRODUCED THEM TO HIS OTHER HOUSE GUEST... **DR. REDMOND**, THE WELL-KNOWN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND THEN THEY SAT DOWN TO DINNER...

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, I THINK I'LL GO INTO THE STUDY FOR SOME TOBACCO...

DON'T BE LONG... DR. REDMOND'S PROMISED TO TELL US SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE EGYPTIAN TOMBS.



ABOUT TEN MINUTES LATER...

... AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE ABSOLUTELY **UNBELIEVABLE** TO THE NORMAL MIND, UNLESS YOU'VE HAD SOME CONTACT WITH THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES OF EGYPT. BUT I MUST BE BORING YOU...

NOT AT ALL, DOCTOR!... I WAS JUST WONDERING WHY GRANDFATHER WAS SO LONG... AND WHAT HAPPENED TO **ELYSE**?



AS IF IN ANSWER TO BRAD'S QUESTION - A SCREAM OF HORROR RAN THROUGH THE ROOM...

WH-WHAT WAS THAT?

HURRY, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!... IT CAME FROM THE **STUDY**!



GRANDFATHER! WHAT HAPPENED

GOOD LORD! THAT MARK ON HIS FOREHEAD!... **ISIS!** BUT-HOW!

AS THOUGH TO BELIE THE SUMMER SEASON, A STRANGE CHILL - AS OF THE GRAVE - FILLED THE ROOM...

WHY IS IT SO COLD IN HERE? **ELYSE!** WHERE'S **ELYSE**?

GOOD HEAVENS, MAN!... THAT **MIRROR!**



DR. REDMOND MOVED WITH UNEXPECTED SPEED, RUSHED TO THE STRANGE MIRROR ON THE WALL...

THERE!

WH-WHY'D YOU DO THAT?



BUT BEFORE DR. REDMOND COULD EXPLAIN HIS ACTIONS...

ELYSE! I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!-

WHY? - IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG?

DIDN'T YOU HEAR THAT SCREAM?



BRAD... I
FEEL SO
STRANGE-

HERE,
DARLING-
LET ME
HELP YOU
TO A
CHAIR.

NO-NOT IN
HERE! LET'S
GET OUT INTO
THE LIVING
ROOM!



SOME HOURS LATER...

WHY DON'T
YOU AGREE
WITH THE
POLICE-THAT
MY GRAND-
FATHER'S
DEATH WAS
THE WORK
OF SOME
TRAMP?

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE
GOING TO THINK
I'M SOME KIND OF
CRACKPOT, BUT I'M
POSITIVE THAT NO
PERSON... OR
THING... CAUSED
HIS DEATH! - IT'S
THE WORK OF
THE MIRROR OF
ISIS!



LISTEN, BRAD-I'VE SEEN
MUCH MORE MYSTICISM
THAN YOU BELIEVE POSSIBLE!
THAT MIRROR IN YOUR
GRANDFATHER'S STUDY IS
DEADLY! AS SOON AS I
SAW IT ON THE WALL, I
RECOGNIZED IT!... SUCH
MIRRORS AS THAT ONE
WERE KEPT HIDDEN IN THE
RECESSES OF THE TEMPLES
OF ISIS IN ANCIENT EGYPT-
AND WERE USED BY THE
HIGH PRIESTHOOD TO
GUARD AGAINST
VIOLATION!



WITHIN HIS MIRROR, THE PRIEST WAS ABLE
TO **PRESERVE HIS SPIRIT AFTER DEATH!**...
AND BRING THE **CURSE OF ISIS** DOWN
UPON THE HEAD OF ANYONE WHO DEFILED
THE TEMPLE BY REMOVING THE MIRROR.
WHEN THE MIRROR IS EXPOSED, THE SPIRIT
CAN ESCAPE... BUT IT CAN **ONLY** TAKE
EFFECT UPON THE PRESENT WORLD WHEN IT
ENTERS THE BODY OF ONE WHO IS A
DIRECT DESCENDENT OF THE PRIESTHOOD!
THEN IT DIRECTS THE **WILL OF THAT**
PERSON!...



THEN...
YOU MUST
MEAN...

YES! - SOMEONE IN
THIS HOUSE IS A
CARRIER FOR THE
SPIRIT OF EVIL! - IT
MIGHT BE...
ANYONE!

NONSENSE! YOU'RE
FORGETTING, DOCTOR...
THIS ISN'T THE DARK
AGES! AND I WISH YOU
WOULDN'T FRIGHTEN
ELYSE WITH THOSE
RIDICULOUS FAIRY
TALES!



SCOFF AS HE MIGHT, THE STRANGE TALE
FASCINATED BRAD, AND... THE NEXT
DAY... HE AND ELYSE WERE IN HIS
GRANDFATHER'S STUDY...

DR. REDMOND WAS SO
CONVINCED BY HIS STORY,
THAT I'M ALMOST TEMPTED
TO DRAW BACK THE DRAPE
ON THIS MIRROR AND
SEE IF THERE ARE ANY
SPOOKS INSIDE!

NO, BRAD...
PLEASE **DON'T!**
I'M - I'M
FRIGHTENED!



DON'T BE FOOLISH! YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO BE TAKEN IN
BY THAT SUPERSTITION,
TOO. NOW, WATCH!... I'LL
JUST PULL THIS CORD...

YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE
DOING!





GEE, THERE'S NOTHING...

WHA-?

SEEING THE REFLECTION OF EVIL WHERE HE **KNEW** ELYSE HAD BEEN STANDING A MOMENT AGO, SHOOK BRAD'S NERVES TO THE CORE! - WITH ONE MOVEMENT, HE PULLED THE DRAPE BACK OVER THE MIRROR... AND WHIRLED!...

ELYSE!



WHAT IS IT, BRAD? WHAT **FRIGHTENED** YOU SO?...

I - I DON'T KNOW... I MUST BE **SEEING** THINGS! IT MUST BE THE POWER OF SUGGESTION... COME ON! - LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE!



A SHORT WHILE LATER...

BRAD... I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE INSTRUCTED THE SERVANTS NOT TO TOUCH THAT MIRROR. I HOPE THAT MEANS YOU'RE TAKING A MORE SENSIBLE ATTITUDE ABOUT IT!

I **STILL** DON'T BELIEVE YOUR STORY, DOCTOR, - BUT THERE'S NO POINT IN TEMPTING FATE!



BUT A SUSPICION, ONCE PLANTED, CAN FESTER LIKE AN OPEN WOUND. BRAD COULDN'T REMOVE THE MOMENTARY GLIMPSE OF EVIL FROM HIS MIND... AN EVIL THAT SEEMED, IN SOME UNEARTHLY WAY, TO BE CONNECTED WITH ELYSE!...

YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ME STRANGELY EVER SINCE WE WERE IN YOUR GRANDFATHER'S STUDY. IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU? -

NO, DARLING... I'M JUST TIRED, I GUESS.



THAT NIGHT, BRAD WAS AWAKENED BY A FEELING OF UNEASINESS...

ELYSE! SHE'S GONE! I'D BETTER FIND HER...



BUT BRAD WAS SPARED THE NECESSITY OF SEARCHING FOR ELYSE AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE BEDROOM, THE FAMILIAR FIGURE OF HIS WIFE SLIPPED LIKE A SHADOW THROUGH THE DOORWAY-



THANK HEAVEN YOUR BACK! I WAS BEGINNING TO WORRY ABOUT... **ELYSE!** WHAT IS IT? WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING?





SLEEPWALKING! FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT...WHAT AM I THINKING?



THE NEXT DAY, BRAD SAID NOTHING TO ELYSE ABOUT HER SLEEPWALKING OF THE NIGHT BEFORE, AND WAS WITH DOCTOR REDMOND... WHEN A FRIGHTENED SCREAM RENT THE AIR...

AIEEE!
BRAD! DR. REDMOND! COME QUICKLY!

IT'S ELYSE! I'M COMING, DARLING! -



I FOUND IT, BRAD... IT'S SO HORRIBLE! - HORRIBLE!

SHH, DARLING... DR. REDMOND AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THIS. GO UPSTAIRS AND LIE DOWN...

IT'S ONE OF THE SERVANTS, BRAD... IT MUST HAVE HAPPENED LAST NIGHT!



THE MIRROR WAS EXPOSED AGAIN!... THE POOR BEGGAR DISREGARDED YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. NOW DO YOU BELIEVE ME?

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT, DR. REDMOND. BUT, FIRST- ELYSE, YOU GET UP TO BED...

ALL RIGHT, DARLING- BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO SLEEP...



THE SAME MARK OF THE SCARAB ON HIS HEAD... THE SAME TYPE OF DAGGER... THE EXPOSED MIRROR! - CAN YOU STILL DOUBT THE EVIL OF THE MIRROR?

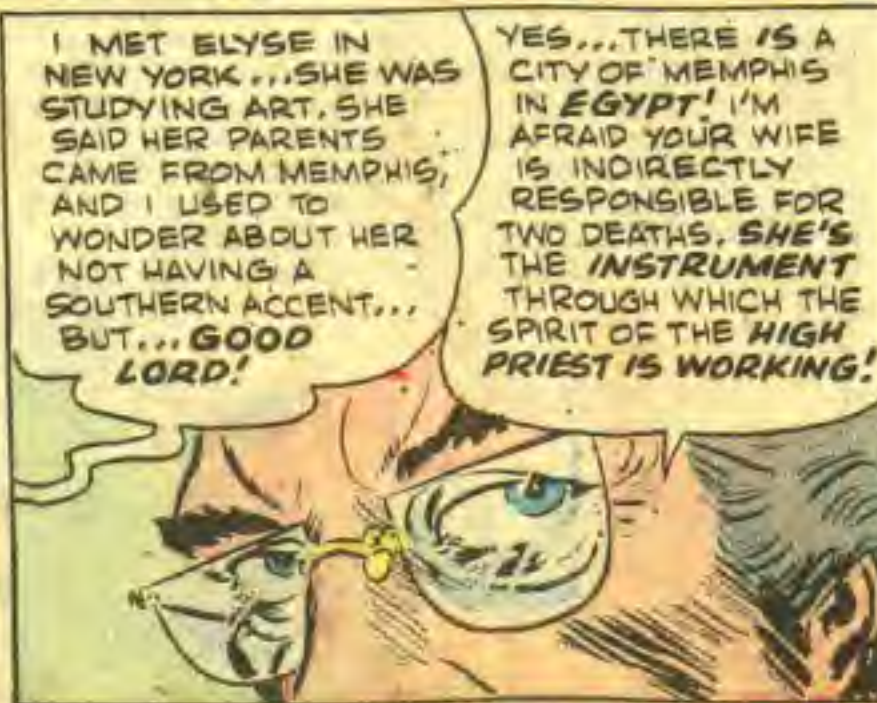
RIGHT NOW... I WISH I COULD! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT ELYSE I WANT YOU TO KNOW...



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

ELYSE'S STRANGE ACTION OF LAST NIGHT, PLUS THE FACE I IMAGINED I SAW IN THE MIRROR, HAS ME VERY WORRIED! -

THERE IS A QUESTION I'D BEEN HESITATING ASKING YOU... BUT FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL OF US, I MUST! HOW LONG DID YOU KNOW ELYSE BEFORE YOU WERE MARRIED? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF HER BACKGROUND?



I MET ELYSE IN NEW YORK... SHE WAS STUDYING ART. SHE SAID HER PARENTS CAME FROM MEMPHIS, AND I USED TO WONDER ABOUT HER NOT HAVING A SOUTHERN ACCENT... BUT... GOOD LORD!

YES... THERE IS A CITY OF MEMPHIS IN EGYPT! I'M AFRAID YOUR WIFE IS INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TWO DEATHS. SHE'S THE INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH THE SPIRIT OF THE HIGH PRIEST IS WORKING!





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